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Chairman: Ms. Wensley ..... (Australia)
later: Ms. Buergo Rodríguez (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Cuba)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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00-44216 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 132: Financing and liquidation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

Agenda item 148: Financing of the Military Observer Group of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (A/54/669 and Corr.1 and A/54/841)

1. **Mr. Yeo** (Director, Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on losses of United Nations property in peacekeeping operations (A/54/669 and Corr.1), said that the report, which had been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 53/230 and 53/235, provided statistics on losses of United Nations property in peacekeeping missions during the period from 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1997. In compiling the report, the Secretariat had used the same categorization and methodology as that followed in the report covering the three years from 1 January 1993 to 31 December 1995 (A/53/340). Because of the vast size of the property holdings of the United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF), data on the loss of assets in UNPF during the period under review was presented separately in annex II to the report. Additional information on the disposal of assets by UNPF was available in the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Protection Force, the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force and the United Nations Peace Forces headquarters (A/52/792). The report before the Committee also contained information on the causes of losses and the measures taken to mitigate losses. In paragraph 21, it was recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the report.

2. **The Chairman** recalled that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had referred to the report of the Secretary-General on losses of United Nations property in peacekeeping operations (A/54/669 and Corr.1) when he had introduced the report of ACABQ on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/54/841).

3. **Mr. Wharton** (United States of America), noting that stolen property accounted for 42 per cent of the total losses incurred in terms of inventory during the reporting period (A/54/669, table 1) and that vehicles were especially prone to theft, asked what measures were being taken to better safeguard United Nations property in general and vehicles in particular, and whether those measures were being implemented in all peacekeeping missions. He also wished to know whether the field asset control system had proven to be effective in detecting losses and holding mission personnel accountable. In that connection he would welcome clarification regarding the status of the review of the proposal to amend the delegation of authority to field missions so as to permit local property survey boards to assess United Nations personnel up to $500. With respect to the practice of withholding two weeks of mission subsistence allowance entitlements from United Nations military and civilian police observers responsible for losses of or damage to United Nations property, he noted with concern that, in a number of such cases, the amounts retained had proven to be insufficient to compensate the Organization and asked what further measures the Secretariat took in such cases.

4. With respect to annex I, he noted that the residual value of the 105 transport vehicles lost because of accidents in 1996 was $708,455, whereas that of the 115 stolen vehicles was $104,723, resulting in average residual values of about $6,700 and $910 per vehicle respectively. The same disparity was to be observed in the figures relating to data-processing equipment, telephone equipment, test and workshop equipment, generators and office equipment, while no figure was provided for the residual value of stolen office furniture. Property lost because of theft had been systematically undervalued. Lastly, regarding annex II, he asked whether the long-overdue measures implemented to mitigate losses would be sufficient to prevent losses of the magnitude of those incurred in UNPF, which had an inventory value of almost $38 million.

5. **Mr. Persaud** (Field Administration and Logistics Division) said that the measures implemented by the Secretariat to mitigate losses were described in paragraphs 24 to 30 of the report covering the period from 1 January 1993 to 31 December 1995 (A/53/340). Further measures had been taken during the period under review. However, the benefits obtained would be apparent only when the statistics for the period from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 1999 became available. According to the data received thus far,

losses due to theft had declined continuously since 1995, with the sharpest fall occurring in 1997.

6. The field asset control system had been functional in all missions only since late 1999 and required further improvement. When the system was fully operational, it would be able to account for all non-expendable assets, including those valued at under $1,500.

7. In March 2000, it had been decided to delegate to field missions authority to take decisions in cases involving lost assets valued at under $500. In all other cases, the missions were required to submit a report to the Property Survey Board. Timely submission of such reports would reduce the write-off for uncollectable amounts. The practice of withholding two weeks of mission subsistence allowance entitlements from United Nations personnel responsible for losses of or damage to United Nations property had proven to be an adequate means of dealing with such cases.

8. A number of steps had been taken to better protect transport vehicles against theft, including the installation of devices that disabled vehicles when they were not in operation. The low residual value of transport vehicles stolen in 1996 was attributable to the fact that the Organization had lacked the necessary funds to replace vehicles in existing missions or to provide new vehicles to the peacekeeping missions established in that year. Instead, vehicles had been transferred from the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia following its liquidation. In 1997, funds had become available to purchase replacement vehicles. Therefore, the residual value of vehicles stolen in that year was significantly higher. The same situation had obtained in respect of certain other categories of equipment.

9. Regarding annex II, he said that the field asset control system had yet to capture data on certain items of property and equipment sent to missions prior to its introduction. The Division was addressing that problem and anticipated that all outstanding items would be accounted for by the end of the current fiscal period on 30 June 2000. It must also be borne in mind that, in a number of cases, losses had occurred because of hostilities.

10. *Ms. Buergo Rodríguez (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

11. **Mr. Farid** (Saudi Arabia) said that in paragraph 22 of the report of ACABQ on the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/54/841), the Advisory Committee recommended that an analysis should be undertaken to determine the effect of continuing high vacancy rates on mission operations. His delegation wished to know whether that analysis had been undertaken and whether vacancies in field missions were included in the Vacancy Announcement Bulletin issued by the International Civil Service Commission.

12. **Mr. Wharton** (United States of America) said that it was still not clear to him why the average residual value of equipment stolen in 1996 was so much lower than that of equipment lost because of accidents. He asked what additional improvements were to be made to the field asset control system and when the system, which was already functioning in all missions, would be deemed fully operational.

13. **Mr. Persaud** (Field Administration and Logistics Division) said that the analysis to which the representative of Saudi Arabia had referred would be undertaken over the next two months. Its outcome would be indicated in the budget proposals for individual peacekeeping missions for the period 2000-2001. All vacancies in field missions were posted on the United Nations web site. In addition, when specialists in a particular field were required, vacancy announcements were circulated to the relevant professional bodies.

14. With respect to the points raised by the representative of the United States, he said that the vehicles used in field missions ranged from jeeps to minibuses and trucks. The theft of a large item, such as a truck, would inflate the total residual value of transport vehicles stolen, giving an artificially high average residual value per item. Thus, no meaningful conclusions could be drawn by comparing the average residual value of vehicles lost because of accidents and that of stolen vehicles.

15. The improved field asset control system would account for all non-expendable assets, including those valued at under $1,500, as well as expendable items, which were not currently accounted for. In addition, the system would contain more information on specific items of equipment, which would produce a number of benefits. For example, efforts would be made to ensure that replacement vehicles were of a similar type to

those already in use in the various field missions so as to reduce the number of spare parts required.

16. **Mr. Wharton** (United States of America) said that he remained convinced that the value of stolen equipment was being understated. He did not believe that the loss of a single truck could have skewed the figures for 1996, given that 226 vehicles had been lost in total. The disparity between the residual value of items lost because of accidents and that of stolen items was apparent not only in respect of transport vehicles, but also in other major categories. Yet there was no disparity in the figures for 1997. It was to be hoped that, in future, the Secretariat would scrutinize information received from field missions more closely.

17. **Mr. Persaud** (Field Administration and Logistics Division) said that neither the Secretariat nor the field missions had sought to deliberately understate the losses incurred. The quality of the relevant data would no doubt improve with the introduction of the field asset control system.

Agenda item 118: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (*continued*) (A/54/764, A/54/817 and A/54/836)

18. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), introducing the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the follow-up to the 1996 review of the programme and administrative practices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (A/54/817), recalled that OIOS had undertaken in 1996 an in-depth review of the United Nations Environment Programme and the administrative practices of its secretariat, including the United Nations Office at Nairobi. A report on the findings, including recommendations, had been issued in February 1997 (A/51/810). A follow-up inspection, conducted in 1999, had indicated that the new management team at UNEP had concentrated its efforts on addressing the recommendations made by the Secretary-General's 1998 Task Force on UNEP and Habitat as well as the issues raised by OIOS in the 1996 in-depth review. The Executive Director had initiated a number of new reform measures to enable UNEP to carry out its refocused role, as defined by the Nairobi Declaration.

19. After a careful review of those reform measures, and the actions taken in compliance with the mandate of its Governing Council and with General Assembly resolution 53/242, OIOS had concluded that UNEP was moving in the right direction and had recaptured the confidence of its stakeholders. There were visible indicators that the Governing Council and the Executive Director had succeeded in transforming UNEP into a viable United Nations entity that should be able to effectively fulfil its mandate. On the basis of that conclusion, OIOS had made 11 new recommendations. Those related to enhanced transparency in relations with donors and Member States, delegation of authority in administrative matters from the Executive Director to the managers directly responsible for programme delivery, strengthened staff-management relations, and institutionalization of systemic feedback mechanisms to assess the usefulness of implemented programmes to end-users. Those recommendations had been accepted by UNEP management. Comments with regard to action to be undertaken to implement them were indicated in chapter IX of the OIOS report.

20. Introducing the report of OIOS on follow-up to the 1997 review of the programme and administrative practices of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) (A/54/764), he recalled that the findings and recommendations of the original inspection had been submitted to the General Assembly in document A/51/884.

21. The report assessed the progress made in implementing the previous recommendations of OIOS. It also addressed the efforts of the new management to revitalize the Centre through a new strategic vision, a focused work programme, a streamlined administrative structure and stronger linkages between its operational and normative activities. OIOS had found encouraging signs of a new emerging culture in Habitat, a culture that put a premium on initiative, creativity and flexibility. The overall conclusion was that the revitalization of Habitat had been given a solid conceptual start and visionary strategic direction. However, due to the historical legacy of serious unresolved problems in the areas of financial and personnel management, progress in those areas lagged behind programmatic revitalization. Eleven new recommendations made in the report were aimed at specific measures to realize necessary improvements in personnel and financial management.

22. All recommendations had been accepted by the management of the Centre. Relevant comments could be found under each recommendation and the implementation of the OIOS recommendations was currently under way.

23. Introducing the report of OIOS on the audit of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (A/54/836), he said that the Rwanda operation had been the first human rights field operation ever established by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and had been a key element in the international community's response to the emergency following the massacres and genocide which had taken place in Rwanda in 1994. From its inception in September 1994 through closure in July 1998, the expenditures of the operation had totalled $30.2 million.

24. The OIOS audit, which had been requested by OHCHR with a view to learning lessons from the operation, had sought to review the adequacy of the Field Operation's internal controls to ensure proper accountability and compliance with relevant United Nations regulations and rules; and to assess whether value for money had been obtained in the use of United Nations resources. Although the findings of the audit had been initially reported to OHCHR in early 1999, the report should help the Organization to reflect on lessons learned from the Operation and take stock of management actions to strengthen controls in OHCHR field operations.

25. As discussed in the report, OIOS had found that there had been serious breakdowns in communications and cooperation between OHCHR headquarters and the field; headquarters oversight and control had been inadequate; and some field staff had lacked the necessary skills and expertise, had not been adequately trained, and had not received sufficient guidance from OHCHR. Moreover, internal controls relating to finance, personnel, procurement and property management either had not been in place or had not functioned effectively, while standard operating procedures had not been implemented, thereby exposing the Field Operation to a considerable risk of fraud. The Operation had also lacked accountability in handling cash.

26. The Field Operation had implemented projects worth approximately $1 million, financed by different United Nations entities, without the knowledge of or authorization by OHCHR management in Geneva. Posts had not been classified, and post levels had not been based on an approved staffing table. Procurement actions in the field had deviated widely from standard United Nations practices. Suppliers of goods and services had been selected without specific criteria or procedures, and contracts for relatively large amounts had been awarded without calling for bids or proposals. The operation had not established an adequate property management system for its non-expendable property, valued at approximately $2 million. Liquidation planning and allotment controls had been inadequate. Also, there had been discrepancies in the amounts of property transferred and sold to other OHCHR operations and United Nations entities.

27. He was pleased to note that, based on the results of the audit, OHCHR had recognized the need to fundamentally change the administration of its field operations to improve management accountability. OIOS took note of the steps taken and planned by OHCHR management to implement OIOS recommendations, which were summarized in the annex to the report. OIOS was continuing to work with OHCHR management in the shared goal of improving the administration and financial management of human rights field operations. Since completing the audit of the Rwanda Operation, OIOS had conducted audits of OHCHR headquarters administration, field support services, and field operations in Burundi and Cambodia.

28. **Mr. Orr** (Canada), referring to the Field Operation in Rwanda, said that it was rather shocking that OHCHR had undertaken such a costly operation without drawing on experience and lessons learned in other parts of the United Nations system; it seemed to be admitting that, since it had been the first time it had conducted such an operation, it had not known how to go about it. In the light of paragraph 10 of the report, his delegation wondered who had been responsible for the financial management and supervision of the operation, since the Chief of the Administrative Unit of the Operation had apparently not exercised those responsibilities. It seemed that OHCHR management in Geneva had been content to write a series of administrative instructions rather than becoming involved in the management of the Operation. He asked what follow-up or disciplinary actions had been taken against the people responsible in Geneva. It was also surprising that no representative of the relevant

substantive departments of the Secretariat was present at the current meeting in order to respond to comments by delegations.

29. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his delegation was concerned that all three of the reports showed weaknesses in internal controls and financial management. It was ironic that the Committee had recently decided that the internal control standards published by the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions should not be incorporated into the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations. It was now obvious that those standards should be disseminated throughout the worldwide United Nations system.

30. Referring to the report on the OHCHR Field Operation in Rwanda, there had clearly been an elementary failure of management in that no internal controls had been established. His delegation agreed that the report should serve as a lesson learned and a precedent for future operations. OHCHR should implement fully the suggestions made by OIOS. As for the report concerning UNEP, he was pleased to note that certain programmatic aspects had improved and that a number of recommendations had been implemented. However, little had been said on the financial management of UNEP; OIOS should specify whether that was because it had found that all was working smoothly and that that aspect required no attention. Although the report showed that the Director of UNEP continued to spend considerable time away from his office in Nairobi, it was gratifying that his deputy had been present in Nairobi and had been available to focus on management issues. His delegation hoped that all the recommendations in relation to UNEP would be fully implemented.

31. As for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, he welcomed the improvements which had been achieved, but it appeared that the administrative support necessary to sustain the efforts of the programme remained weak. Additional attention should be given to improving management and internal controls. Generally speaking, further efforts were needed to improve monitoring and evaluation. It was currently difficult for Member States which contributed to such activities to determine how well their contributions were used; monitoring and evaluation units should therefore be strengthened.

32. He proposed that the Committee should take note of the three reports, in the expectation that the recommendations contained in them would be implemented expeditiously.

33. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that each of the OIOS reports should have made reference to General Assembly resolution 54/244 as well as to resolution 48/218 B, since the later resolution had in effect been a review of the earlier one. Similarly, his delegation could not see why only paragraph 7 of resolution 54/244 had been cited in the initial paragraph of each report, a selectivity for which there was no justification and which gave cause for concern.

34. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) noted that the reports relating to the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements did not meet the requirements of General Assembly resolution 54/244, in that the Secretary-General should have made more substantive comments and the views of the departments concerned should have been reflected in the body of the reports. His delegation agreed with most of the recommendations of OIOS and looked forward to their early implementation. Turning to the report on the United Nations Environment Programme (A/54/817), he expressed concern about the delegation of authority (para. 57), the availability of the Executive Director for dialogue with staff representatives (para. 60), and the issue of training resources (para. 63). As for the recommendation contained in paragraph 61 that a small task force should be constituted, further detail should be provided in that regard and it should be specified whether there would be any financial implications.

35. Concerning the report relating to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (A/54/764), he expressed the hope that every effort would be made to enhance the effectiveness of the Centre's resource mobilization (para. 75); he wished to know what steps had been taken to implement the recommendation in paragraph 77 that the Centre should seek assistance from the Archives and Records Management Section of the Office of Central Support Services; and clarification should be provided regarding the recommendation in paragraph 79 for the reclassification of posts in the new organizational structure. His delegation also strongly supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 81 relating to dialogue between management and staff.

36. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) said that the departments concerned had accepted the recommendations and looked forward to implementing them; indeed, a system existed for tracking implementation. As for the lapses that had occurred in the operation in Rwanda, it had been the first time that an operation of such a size had been mounted. The lessons learned had now been institutionalized, and measures had been put in place to ensure that the same problems did not recur.

37. The representative of the United States of America had commented, in reference to the reports relating to the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, that programmatic aspects had been followed up more than administrative and management issues. He agreed with that comment, but measures had now been taken to address that concern.

38. The purpose of the task force recommended for the United Nations Environment Programme (A/54/817, para. 61) was to ensure that the individuals concerned would come together with the clear objective of solving the problem at hand in a focused time-frame and as expeditiously as possible. As for the issue of the Office's mandate, the latter had been reaffirmed in 1999 and it was in that context that the observations and recommendations before the Committee had been made.

39. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that he was in no way questioning the mandate granted by General Assembly resolution 48/218 B, but merely emphasizing the need also to cite General Assembly resolution 54/244, since the latter reviewed and complemented resolution 42/218 B; the mandate of OIOS was therefore dependent on both resolutions.

40. **Mr. Hae-yun Park** (Republic of Korea), referring to the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, said that his delegation attached considerable significance to the failure of internal controls in finance, personnel, procurement and property management, and believed that those failures had been in large part due to inexperience on the part of OHCHR. The latter should make every effort to implement the OIOS recommendations expeditiously.

Agenda item 121: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Analysis of the organizational structure and the personnel and technical resources of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Secretariat (*continued*) (A/54/520/Add.1 and A/54/868)

41. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the Advisory Committee's report (A/54/868) on the report of the Secretary-General on the organizational structure and the personnel and technical resources of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the United Nations Secretariat (A/54/520/Add.1). Paragraph 3 of the Advisory Committee's report outlined the posts and other staff resources currently available to the Non-Governmental Organizations Section. In paragraphs 5 and 6 of its report, the Advisory Committee recalled the circumstances in which the subject had been taken up previously, as well as the reservations which the Advisory Committee had expressed and the fact that it had requested, on two occasions, a comprehensive report on the administrative and management implications of the large increase in the number of non-governmental organizations involved in the work of the United Nations. He regretted that such a report had not yet been submitted.

42. As noted in paragraph 4 of its report, the Advisory Committee had no objection to the Secretary-General's proposal to establish two additional posts in the Section. However, for the reasons indicated in paragraphs 5 and 6, the Advisory Committee had recommended that the posts should be established on a temporary basis. Lastly, the Secretariat, in preparing the comprehensive report referred to in paragraph 6, might wish to take into account the findings and recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/51/655) entitled "Review of financial resources allocated by the United Nations system to activities by non-governmental organizations".

43. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that the Secretary-General had not made a convincing case for the establishment of two new posts in the Non-Governmental Organizations Section. He would like to know the current vacancy rates in the Section and in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. He

agreed with the Advisory Committee that a comprehensive review of the Section was needed. Until that review was submitted, his delegation would have difficulty in considering the proposal to establish new posts.

44. **Mr. Abdalla** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said he had noted that the Non-Governmental Organizations Section used the services of volunteers from various non-governmental organizations to help it to cope with its heavy workload. He wondered whether there were any special criteria for the acceptance of such volunteers, what types of non-governmental organizations they came from and whether any of them came from non-governmental organizations based in developing countries. He also asked how the Section struck a balance between the different views held by different non-governmental organizations and how it ensured fair representation of the whole range of non-governmental organizations among the volunteers it accepted. Such volunteers might influence decisions concerning non-governmental organizations in general.

45. He supported the Advisory Committee's recommendations and understood its justification for recommending the approval of two new posts. The Section must be provided with staff who held United Nations contracts and who were therefore loyal to the Organization and answerable to the Secretary-General.

46. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that his Government attached great importance to the role of non-governmental organizations in the modern world and that it was willing to support any proposal by the Secretary-General that would enhance the functioning of the unit responsible for those organizations. Like the Libyan delegation, his delegation fully supported the proposal to establish two new posts in the Non-Governmental Organizations Section and concurred with the Advisory Committee's views on the subject. In view of the obviously heavy and increasing workload of the Section, he appealed to all delegations to support that request for posts. Like the United States delegation, his delegation attached importance to the submission of the comprehensive report referred to in paragraph 6 of the Advisory Committee's report. However, it saw no relationship between the submission of that report and the proposal to establish the two new posts; those issues should be considered separately.

47. **Mr. Fox** (Australia) said that he attached particular importance to the Advisory Committee's request for a comprehensive report on the impact of non-governmental organizations on the work of the United Nations. He asked when the Secretariat expected to issue that report.

48. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said, with respect to vacancy rates, that all of the five Professional and four General Service posts in the Non-Governmental Organizations Section were currently filled; the vacancy rate was therefore zero. In the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as at the end of March 2000, 20 Professional posts (out of 287) and one General Service post (out of 230) had been vacant, resulting in vacancy rates of 7 per cent and 0.4 per cent, respectively, in those two categories. The budgeted rates had been 6.5 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively.

49. The comprehensive report requested by the Advisory Committee would be addressed in the context of the budget proposals for the biennium 2002-2003. He confirmed that the relevant report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/51/655) would be taken into account in the preparation of that report.

50. **Mr. Khan** (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) said that volunteers from non-governmental organizations were not used to perform substantive tasks of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section, such as the servicing of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Instead, they were used mainly for logistical and administrative support, especially when major events were taking place. Such support included tasks related to accreditation, registration, circulation of papers and so forth. The acceptance of volunteers was based solely on offers made by non-governmental organizations; the Section did not ask individual organizations or countries for volunteers.

51. **Mr. Abdalla** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that at the review of the Cairo population conference his delegation had noted a tendency to support one particular viewpoint and to marginalize others. The method of choosing speakers from accredited non-governmental organizations should be reconsidered, as it could lead to the exclusion of certain points of view.

52. Equally, the assignment of functions referred to by the representative of the Department could mean

that those entrusted with such tasks as accreditation and logistical support also represented one viewpoint only, whereby it was the responsibility of the Department to ensure the neutrality of the United Nations.

53. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba) said that, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, her delegation was in a position to appreciate the increased workload of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section. The establishment of new posts to enable the Section to reorganize and improve its work was fully justified by the increased contribution of non-governmental organizations to the work of the United Nations system. She therefore welcomed the proposal to establish two new posts in the Section, although, considering the Section's heavy workload and reliance on volunteers, that staffing increase was insufficient.

54. She recalled a previous proposal for the reclassification of one post in the Section from P-4 to P-5; since no such reclassification was mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, she asked for information on the subject. That proposal should be approved as part of the process of strengthening the Section, especially since the post of Chief of the Section had been upgraded from P-5 to D-1, and the Section's work increasingly involved high-level contacts. It was important to strengthen the Section not only to increase the number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status, but also to monitor the work of such organizations and their contribution to the United Nations system. She agreed with the Libyan delegation that, for as long as volunteers were required in the Section, the need to ensure wide geographical distribution and to include interns from developing countries should be borne in mind.

55. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) recalled that the two reclassification proposals referred to by the representative of Cuba had been made in informal consultations on the programme budget for 2000-2001 at the main part of the fifty-fourth session. The proposal to upgrade a P-5 post to D-1 had been approved and had been reflected in the programme budget for the current biennium. However, since no consensus had been reached on the proposal to upgrade a P-4 post to P-5, it had not been reflected in the budget. The proposals in the Secretary-General's report reflected requirements as they currently stood. In the light of the Advisory Committee's report, the Secretariat would review the number and classification of the posts in the Section against the background of the comprehensive report to be submitted.

56. **Mr. Medina** (Morocco) recalled that Morocco had been one of the delegations which had been in favour of the two reclassifications (from P-5 to D-1 and from P-4 to P-5) proposed for the Non-Governmental Organizations Section. He was pleased that the Committee had agreed to the first of those proposals. While his delegation would continue to advocate the second reclassification, it was nevertheless pleased that two new posts had been proposed for the Section.

57. **Mr. Boumadou** (Algeria) said that he strongly supported the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a new P-4 post and a new General Service post in the Non-Governmental Organizations Section and that he endorsed the views expressed by the Advisory Committee. He also agreed with the United States delegation on the need for a comprehensive report on the Section's needs. However, the approval of the two new posts should not be linked to the submission of that report.

58. **Mr. Hassan** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, in view of the increased workload of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section, he strongly supported the establishment of a new P-4 post and a new General Service post in that Section.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.